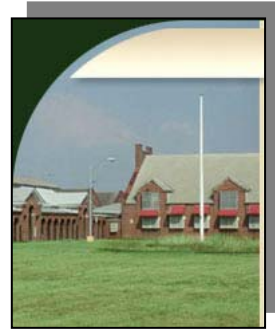


Laurel Hill Project Advisory Citizens Oversight Committee

Recommendations Regarding the Proposed National Register Nomination of the District of Columbia Workhouse and Reformatory Historic District at Laurel Hill

October 4, 2005



The Laurel Hill Project Advisory Citizens Oversight Committee was established by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in February 2005 to monitor the development of the Reformatory and Penitentiary area at Laurel Hill, adjacent to Silverbrook Road in Lorton, VA.

The Oversight Committee has reviewed the National Register nomination of the proposed 512-acre District of Columbia Workhouse and Reformatory Historic District at Laurel Hill. The committee has developed the following recommendations for consideration by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

Recommendations

1. The Oversight Committee recommends that the Board of Supervisors defer the proposed nomination at least until spring 2006.

- The deferral will allow sufficient time for solicitation and review of responses to the Request For Proposal (RFP) at the Laurel Hill Reformatory and Penitentiary site adjacent to Silverbrook Road. The RFP process will inform the County about the viability of re-use recommendations for the Reformatory and Penitentiary area, which were accepted by the Board of Supervisors on December 6, 2004.
- The deferral will allow additional time for review of the proposed Historic Register nomination. The Oversight Committee believes additional review is necessary.

2. The Oversight Committee recommends that the Board of Supervisors consider the establishment of a historic district at Laurel Hill that conforms to the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in the original deed of transfer.

- The proposed National Register nomination increases the number of contributing resources identified in the MOA from 136 to 194, omits contributing features identified in the MOA, revises the proposed boundary of the historic district and extends the period of historic significance to 1961.
- According to a September 14, 2005 opinion by the Fairfax County Office of the County Attorney, "The terms of the Memorandum apply only to the 136 contributing structures and 106 non-contributing structures referenced in the Memorandum and described in the January 2000 *Final Historic Structures Determination of Eligibility Report*. An amendment to the Memorandum would have to be executed by the parties to the Memorandum to make any structures listed in the National Register nomination subject to the terms of the Memorandum."

- The Memorandum of Agreement notes that the January 2000, *Final Historic Structures Determination of Eligibility Report* was prepared by GSA and concurred with by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (Report located in the files of VDHR, site number 029-947).
 - Re-use plans for the Workhouse (Lorton Arts Foundation site), the Spring Hill Senior Center and the Reformatory and Penitentiary area were developed and approved under the guidelines of the Memorandum of Agreement.
 - The Memorandum of Agreement states that the historic district at Laurel Hill is to be treated as a local historic overlay district, *even if it is not designated by the County as a local historic overlay district*. If the proposed National Register nomination is used to establish or inform a county historic overlay district, then it will be necessary for the County to rectify differences between the local overlay district and the MOA.
 - There is no discussion attached to the proposed nomination regarding responsibility for maintenance and stabilization of additional contributing resources. It is assumed that this responsibility would fall to the Board of Supervisors unless and until these resources can be incorporated into a re-use plan.
- 3. The Oversight Committee recommends additional review of the proposed nomination's identification of 194 contributing resources and the period of historic significance to 1961. The committee recommends completion of the review in time for presentation to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources at its quarterly meeting in June or September 2006.**
- The previous draft nomination suggests that in spite of continuing construction and rehabilitative programs, the period of Progressive penal reform is 1910 – 1946 and the period of historic significance is 1910 – 1955.
 - There are questions regarding the proposed nomination's extension of the period of significance to 1961.
 - Additional review of the nomination text is required to clarify the relationship of some contributing resources to the proposed historic district.
- 4. The Oversight Committee recommends that the Fairfax County Architectural Review Board (ARB) complete its Standards and Guidelines for the proposed historic district at Laurel Hill by January 2006, to facilitate the review of re-use proposals.**
- The first draft of the Standards and Guidelines was reviewed in 2003.
 - A recommendation for the ARB to develop standards and guidelines for the historic district was included in the recommendations developed by the Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Citizens Task Force and approved by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on December 6, 2004.
- 5. The Oversight Committee recommends that the Board of Supervisors reiterate its support for the Lorton Arts Foundation project during the additional review of the proposed National Register nomination. The committee believes the additional review is in the best interests of L.A.F. and the Reformatory – Penitentiary area at Laurel Hill.**

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